and the width of the wall facing on to the *ruai* is some indication of the general social standing of the family that owns it. In Rumah Nyala, of the Sungai Sut, the smallest *bilek* was 12ft. 6ins. wide by 16ft. deep, while the largest was 23ft. wide by 17ft. 6ins. deep.

(*b*) The *sadau*. Above each *bilek*, and jutting out over the *ruai*, is the *sadau*, which is a kind of garret or loft. Here, in immense bark bins, is stored the grain (*padi*) grown by the members of the family. Also kept in the *sadau* are the various implements used in farming, and the mats, baskets and trays used when *padi* is being husked and winnowed.

(*c*) The *ruai*. The door of each family *bilek* opens on to another section of the apartment known as the *ruai*, and which—like the *bilek*—is the private property of the family to which it belongs. The *ruai* serves many purposes. Immediately adjacent to the wall dividing the *bilek* from the *ruai* is a section about three to four feet in width, known as the *tempuan lesong*. Here stands the *lesong*, a large wooden mortar, in which the women of the family pound their *padi* with long, hardwood poles, so to husk it. Adjoining this narrow strip comes another section, usually about 10 to 12 feet in width, and completely unobstructed by posts or partitions; it thus forms a corridor or gallery giving access to all parts of the long-house. It is, in fact, a kind of village street, and is used by all the members of the community as a general thoroughfare. Flanking this corridor or 'street' are the *padong ruai*, open, rectangular spaces, one of which belongs to each family apartment. These *padong ruai* are the main centres of community life and social intercourse. Like the *bilek*, of which it is an extension, each section of the *ruai* (composed of the three divisions just described) is owned by a single family. It is the duty of each family to keep its section of the corridor in good repair so that all may use it. But this general use involves no diminution of ownership rights; each family retains the right to cordon off its section of the *ruai* during the performance of certain rituals, and on other occasions to insist (on the pain of fine) that prohibitions governing its use be fully observed by all members of the long-house community. The boundaries of each family section of the *ruai* are clearly marked by the main supporting posts of the long-house structure.

(*d*) The *tanju*. Beyond the *ruai*, and so not covered by any form of roof, is the *tanju*, an open platform, usually about 20 to 25 feet wide. As with the corridor of the *ruai*, all the independently owned section of the *tanju* are joined to form an unbroken, raised platform, which fronts the whole long-house. The *tanju* is used for a wide variety of domestic tasks; in particular it is the place where *padi* is sunned prior to pounding.

4. It is the joining together of a number of different family apartments (each made up of a *bilek*, a *sadau*, a *ruai* and a *tanju*) that produces the attenuated structure known as a long-house. A long-house community is thus, in essence, a village consisting of a single 'street' of attached apartments. It is most important to realize, however, that each apartment is the private property of one family. Figure 2, depicts a typical Iban long-house, in this case, of ten family apartments. Let us now examine more closely the various family units of which a long-house community is composed, for these are the basic corporate groups of Iban social and economic life.

The Iban Bilek Family

5. In Government and other publications the family apartments of an Iban long-house are commonly referred to as 'doors.' A long-house, that is, is usually

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×243 100. *Ngebak* and sowing are carried on more or less simultaneously. Thus a man and his wife will clear six or seven square poles, and then retrace their steps to dibble and sow this area, and so on. If there be several men in the labour team, most of them will devote their time to *ngebak*, leaving one of their number to dibble. Following a good burn however, all of this arduous re-clearing of the land is avoided, and planting goes ahead without interruption.

The Planting of the Padi: Dibbling

[462] 101. The Iban method of planting *padi* is a simple, though onerous one. Its leading feature is the sharp division of labour between the sexes. In planting a farm, man and woman work together, the man ranging on ahead with his dibbling-stick, and the woman following him up to cast seed into the holes which he has made. A dibbling-stick (*tugal*) is a hardwood staff, usually about 5ft. 6ins. [413] in length, with a circular cross-section. Often it is notched at the top to afford a better grip, and flared out slightly at the base, before tapering away to a point. Held firmly in the hand, and at about shoulder height, the dibbling-stick is thrust sharply into the ground, and then withdrawn with a very slight twist of the wrist (Plate 10). Almost all men are ambidextrous, making holes first on one side and then on the other, and reaching into inaccessible corners with ease. In good soil a dibbling-stick makes a conical hole about three inches in depth, and one and a half inches in diameter, at the surface. When traversing unobstructed ×243 ground, Iban men attain a very high pace of dibbling, and I have timed men to 461 exceed 110 holes per minute. But this sort of pace is only encountered on ritual occasions, when visiting men enjoy showing off and competing with one another. A detailed series of measurements showed that in the normal course of everyday work, most men maintain a dibbling pace of about 60 holes per minute.

×243 102. Of wider significance is the standard placement of dibble holes over a given area. The method I used to calculate this was to cast a yard rule at random onto a dibbled tract of *umai*, and then make a count of the number of holes in one square yard of ground. The dibbling of many different men was studied, and a total of 56 counts made. There was an overall range of from 8 to 16 dibble-holes per square yard, and a difference in individual averages ranging from 10·3 to 13·4 holes per square yard. The general mean for the 56 counts was 12·2 holes per square yard, and the median and mode were both 12. If the general mean of 12·2 dibble-holes per square yard be accepted, this represents an average of 59,048 holes per acre.

The Planting of the Padi: Sowing

×243 103. In the wake of the dibblers move the sowers. Tied around her waist, or ●415 grasped in her left hand, each woman carries a small seed basket, or *keban*. Measuring about six inches in diameter and eight to nine inches in depth, a *keban* can comfortably hold several pints of *padi* seed. The plaiting of these *keban* is woman's work, and the best of them, made from fine strands of *rotan*, are decorated with beautiful spiral patterns (Figure 4). At the foot of the slope being planted, stands a larger type of basket (about 10 inches in diameter, and 18 inches in height), called an *uyut*, which contains upwards of two or three gallons of *padi* seed (*benih*), and to this the women return, when necessary, to replenish their *keban*. This *uyut* is surrounded by a set of ritual prohibitions (*pemali*).

×243 104. When sowing (*menih*), a woman takes a handful of seed from her *keban*, and bending down so that her hand is within about ten inches of a dibble-hole, she ejects a tiny stream of grain from between her index and middle fingers. This

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operation calls for considerable dexterity and concentration, for the seed has to be made to enter a hole of not more than about one and a half inches in diameter. Each hole is sighted, and then the seed directed towards it with a little flick of the hand (Plate 11). From one handful of seed a woman sows about seven or eight holes. (A count of 50 instances gave a range of from three to fifteen, and a general mean of 7·5 holes sown per handful of seed). Women vary a good deal in skill. A novice finds it necessary to place her hand within a few inches of the ground, and even then she may not succeed in getting all of the seed to enter the hole for which she is aiming; she also has difficulty in controlling the number of grains ejected, and commonly has an average of five or six more seeds per hole, than does an accomplished sower. In contrast, an expert sower deftly flicks the seed from a distance of about 18 inches, maintains an extremely steady rate (i.e. number of grains per hole), and seldom has seeds fall outside the dibble-hole. The pace of sowing varies from about 40 to 65 holes per minute, according to skill and the state of the farm; after a bad burn, for example, the surface is littered with logs, and this slows up both dibbling and sowing.

Figure 4. An Iban *keban*, or sowing basket

105. In studying sowing methods, I made a count of the number of grains in 192 different dibble-holes, taken at random, on more than a dozen different farms. This count showed an overall range of from 5 to 35 grains per hole, and a general mean of 11·7 grains per hole; the median was 11 and the mode 12. A detailed analysis of the sowing styles of 13 different members of Rumah Nyala, from unmarried girls to women of over 60 years, gave personal averages varying from 9 to 16 grains per hole. In Table 3, the sowing styles of six of these women are compared. Each average, etc. is based on a series of more than ten separate observations. All six women were well practised in the art of sowing, but it will

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winnowed and stored. On one occasion however, I observed a woman deliberately putting poorly formed panicles into her seed basket. She said that she was doing this because she had pity on such small and imperfect *padi* plants ("*sayau ka leka mit*"), and wanted to give them another chance—a good example this of the highly personal feelings which the Iban have about their *padi*.

114. All Iban take the greatest interest in new or uncommon varieties of *padi*, and I encountered a number of cases of men having collected seed on their travels (*bejalai*). Majau, a man of Rumah Nyala, lost his *padi pun* when his *dampa* was destroyed by fire; on a subsequent journey to the Ulu Rejang he managed to procure seed from a Kayan family, and this, after appropriate rituals, became his new *padi pun*. Kubu, another man of Rumah Nyala, went in 1948 on a trading expedition to the Penihing people of the Upper Mahakam River. He returned to Sarawak with small quantities of three different kinds of *padi* seed, having purchased two of them, and purloined the third. In 1949 all of this seed was planted and the resulting crop stored away so that larger areas could be sown in 1950. The purloined variety, of which Kubu was more than proud, had exceptional characteristics: the length of the rachis was about 14 inches, with some 27 branches, carrying between 530 and 560 grains. This inter-change of *padi* seed, both sanctioned and unsanctioned, among the hill tribes of Borneo shows every sign of being a long-established custom.

115. After the harvest each variety of seed is stored in a separate container. These containers are made either from plaited cane, or from strips of bark sewn securely together; their most important feature is a lid that fits tightly enough to protect the seed from mice and rats. When filled—they vary in capacity from about two to ten gallons—they are stacked away in the loft (*sadau*), or around the walls of the *bilek* until the time for sowing returns. Although men take an active part in the rituals associated with sowing, it is rare to find a man with an accurate knowledge of all the varieties of seed owned by his *bilek* family. This is essentially the woman's province, and whenever I began to record the names, and other details of *padi* seed, the man of the family, hopelessly out of his depth, would hurriedly summon his wife, or some other woman of the family to enlighten me.

116. Iban families always store away considerably more seed than they are likely to require at the next sowing. My investigations showed that after the harvest a family of average size (i.e. 5-6 members) had seed holdings amounting to from 50 to 60 gallons, or approximately double their probable requirements at the next sowing. On May 20th, 1950, for example, the *bilek* family of Kubu, with six members, held the seed of 18 different strains of *padi*, the quantities varying from 1½ to 5 gallons, and totalling 57 gallons. Not much more than about half of the seed of each strain is sown, and the residue is stored away again lest any section of the farm fail or be destroyed. After the harvest however the old seed is consumed, and replaced by grain from the new crop.

Catch-Crops

117. A special feature of Iban agriculture is the cultivation of a wide range of catch-crops, interspersed on the same land as the *padi*. A few, such as *ensabi* (a kind of mustard plant, the leaves of which are eaten), are sown separately, immediately after the burn. Others are planted simultaneously with the *padi*, their seeds being mixed up in the same sowing basket as the *padi*, and sown into the same dibble-holes. The most important of these are:

(*a*) *buah rampo:* cucumber;

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way the grain (still in the hull, of course) is gradually separated from the branches of the panicles. The first treading of a bushel of panicles takes about seven to nine minutes—the time varying with the degree of ripeness at reaping. After this first treading the panicles are pushed away to one side, for the next process, called *ngeruman*, which is normally women's work. The panicles (now called *ruman*) are lifted in small bundles by a squatting woman, shaken, and sifted through with the fingers of both hands, to free any loose grains which may still be present. Then they are tossed onto a separate pile to be trodden a second time. Another way of doing *ngeruman* is with a device known as a *lantai panggau*. This *lantai panggau* is a large grille (about 6 ft. × 3 ft.), made from intertwined strips of split *rotan*; it is fastened to a wooden frame and then suspended at about waist height. Bundles of trodden panicles are thrown onto this grille, and then shaken and churned up with the hands, so that the grain falls through the fine mesh, leaving the worthless straw behind. If a *lantai panggau* is used a second treading is not always necessary.

150. Threshing, particularly if young people are participating, is a light-hearted occasion. As the men vie with one another, each swaying like a dancer over his stack of *padi*, there is a steady stream of banter and gossip; and, when the workers pause to smoke, chew betal and eat cucumbers, riddles are posed, guessed at and laughed over. Threshing is strenuous work, and while they are at it the almost naked bodies of the young men glisten with perspiration; but it is work that is soon over, for *padi* which has taken three weeks and more to harvest can be threshed in one day. On 23rd March, 1950, for example, I watched threshing by the *bilek* family of Kubu (No. 21), of Rumah Nyala. The treading (*nungko*) was done by Kubu's son-in-law, aged 32, and by his son of about 13 years; while Kubu and his daughter, aged 28, attended to the task of sifting (*ngeruman*). They were threshing a large *bidai* full of panicles—all the *padi* which had been reaped during the previous 20 days. The work began soon after eight o'clock in the morning and continued (though with frequent brief pauses) until two o'clock in the afternoon; when all the grain that had been threshed out—about 38 bushels of it—was packed carefully away in another *bidai*.

151. In discussing threshing with the Iban I often asked why it was that they did not adopt the more speedy method of using flails. Almost all Iban men are familiar with this technique having seen it, when on their travels, being followed by Chinese and others. Their reply was always the same: "We Iban simply dare not (*enda kempang*) strike our *padi*, for if we did so the *padi* spirits (*antu padi*) would take offence, and, in anger, desert us". This, it was explained, would result in an actual lessening of the harvest; in use the *padi* would soon become exhausted (*padi rua*); and the crops of future years would be scant and poor. Again, it is ritually forbidden (*mali*) to tread on the *padi* after it has been threshed, and is waiting to be stored away in its *bidai*. The sanction is the same; as one man put it, the *padi* must not be trodden on "lest the *padi* spirits decline to be cared for by us" ("*Enggai ka antu padi enggai di impun kitai*"). It is important to note that here, as with so many Iban taboos, it is the intention of the perpetrator that matters. If in the course of threshing, a man finds it necessary to tread on the *padi* this causes no offence—the *padi* will understand, it is said; but to walk over the *padi* after it has been threshed is a wilful act, expressing disrespect of which the *padi* spirit is keenly conscious.

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Winnowing

243 155. In due course the remainder of the crop is threshed, and then, on a fine and settled day, the operation of winnowing is embarked upon. Mats (*tikai singang*) are laid down over the entire extent of the family *tanju* (open platform of *dampa* or long-house); the *bidai* is opened up and the *padi* transferred to a 285 series of *baka*. A *baka* is a large, circular basket, plaited from split *rotan* canes, and especially designed for the handling of grain; they vary in capacity from about five to nine gallons, the standard size being a *baka* of one bushel, or *pasu*. When a 282 *baka* has been filled it is hoisted on to the head, and carried out to the *tanju* where the winnowers are waiting. Leaning slightly forward the bearer tilts her basket and lets the *padi* pour in a steady stream on to the mats below. As soon as the 415 *padi* begins to fall the women (either one, two or three of them), who are armed with winnowing-trays (*chapan*), wave these rapidly up and down creating a strong draught that drives to one side any empty husks (*ampa*), while those containing kernels drop to the mat beneath (Plate 18). (The term for pouring out the *padi* is *berayar*, while the fanning action is known as *puput*, v.f. *muput*). Gradually a heap of sound *padi* is formed. At intervals the refuse is gathered up and winnowed a second time by hand; i.e. actually in the winnowing tray (*chapan*). In this way the completely empty husks (*ampa raya*) are lost, while the partially filled husks (*ampa brat*), and the small proportion of sound *padi* which has been inadvertently included, is retained. This mixture of *ampa brat* and sound *padi* is termed *brauk*, and is usually reserved to be pounded and eaten during the 439 immediately following days. (Some Iban store this *brauk* away and sell it, in due course, to Chinese traders. As *padi* is sold by bulk and not by weight, the Iban gain on the transaction. They vindicate themselves by saying that such a practice is but mild retaliation for the double-dealing of the Chinese).

156. Winnowing always results in a loss in bulk, and in some cases, when for example, the *padi* has been severely attacked by the rice bug and other insects, the shrinkage is considerable. From observations made at Rumah Nyala, I would make the general estimate that loss in bulk at winnowing from about 5% to 20% in the worst cases. A careful measurement of the yield of a test plot of 1/180th of an acre, showed a loss in bulk at winnowing of about 11%, and this was *padi* classed by the Iban as being of better than average quality. In discussing yields it is important, therefore, to state clearly whether the measurement was made before or after winnowing.

157. When the winnowing is over the heap of sound *padi* is raked out on the mats and allowed to lie in the heat of the sun. This treatment is designed to improve the storing qualities of the *padi*, and it is usual for the sunning to continue for at least several days. At nights the *padi* is enfolded in mats, and protected from the elements by stout roofing made from palm fronds. The *padi* is then carried back to the *ruai* to wait for the final operation of being stored away in the huge bark-bins which each family keeps in the loft (*sadau*) of its apartment.

The Storing of the Padi

158. The final storing away (*simpan*, v.f. *besimpan*) is an event of great importance, for the Iban believe that if the correct rituals are faithfully performed their *padi* will last longer, that it will not be used up so quickly as would otherwise be the case. They believe that the supernatural qualities of fertility and increase which are the special attributes of *padi* are still present after the grain has been reaped, threshed, winnowed and stored. Everything depends on taking the

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necessary safeguards against injurious and alien influences, and in winning the esteem of the *padi* spirits by the proper rituals. It is an occasion hedged around by numerous prohibitions (*pemali*). The *ruai* is cordoned off, and while the *padi* is being handled no outsider may intervene, nor may the participants converse with one another. Offerings are meticulously made, and placed both in the main bin (*tibang*) and beside the stack of *padi* lying in its protective mat on the *ruai*. With great care the bin is fumigated, rubbed with fragrant bark and creepers,[1] anointed with fluid in which innumerable magical charms have been immersed,[2] and 'fed' with rice and *tuak* to ensure that its spirit will not molest that of the *padi*. Beside the *bidai* a dozen or more baskets (*baka*) are laid out. Then, after a final prayer of consecration, the actual handling of the *padi* begins.

159. Kneeling before the stack of grain on the *ruai* the woman in charge gently scoops it into a winnowing tray (*chapan*) with her cupped hands. The action is slow and studied, and the woman has the air of a votary handling some sacred and precious substance. This, of course, is a vital element in the ritual; the *padi* must be coaxed and charmed, and conducted to its abode with all the decorum and respect which it deserves. From the winnowing tray the *padi* is deftly poured into the waiting baskets (all of which have been 'fed' in advance), and when all are full, they are lifted up one by one to the loft (*sadau*), and tipped into the bin. At intervals two of the men pack the *padi* tightly into place by treading it down with a queer, dance-like step—shuffle, shuffle, jump—beginning at the periphery of the bin and following a spiral track until they arrive at its centre. The baskets are handed down again, and so the task continues until all of the *padi* is safely stored away. Because of the elaborate ritual, storing is a slow process, but even so, it seldom lasts for more than about half a day. The average rate of storing is about ten to twelve bushels per hour.

160. Not until all of their *padi* has been stored away are the members of a *bilek* family able to reckon with confidence the extent to which the crop is likely to meet their requirements of the coming year. A count is made of the number of baskets of *padi* (taking each as a *pasu*, or bushel) hoisted up to the loft, but the best check is had when the state of the bins is known. The same bark-bins are used year after year, and a family soon comes to know what the state of its bins means in terms of yearly consumption. (A large bin measures about 5 ft. in diameter by 3 ft. in depth; most families have one or two of these, and a number of smaller bins). Growing *padi* on hill-side clearings in the jungle is an uncertain venture; in good years there are bumper crops and grain in abundance, but the Iban are no strangers to failure and scarcity. The yearly storing always has an atmosphere of suspense about it. When the results are known, those with a deficit bemoan their lot and begin reckoning how soon it will be that they will have to set about purchasing *padi* from their kin or Chinese traders; while those with a surplus talk jubilantly of the jars, the gongs, and the other property that they will be able to buy.

[1] As this action is performed the following *sampi* is uttered:
"Oh bark-bin, with these fragrant roots we rub you, with this oil we anoint you, with this soap we cleanse you; to rid you of all things improper, of all things defective.
Oh let all things evil and untoward, flee from hence and be utterly gone!"

[2] The accompanying *sampi* is:
"To accompany the storing away of our *padi*, we use these charms that make return and comfort certain;
Oh bark-bin, may you become full to overflowing,
Within you may our *padi* procreate and become plenteous".

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9. After the firing of the farms: the burn has been a bad one and to clear the land for sowing the farmer is gathering scattered branches and making bonfires of them. This operation is called *ngebak*. Photograph taken on 3rd October, 1949; Sungai Sut, Kapit District. 372

10. Dibbling taking place. The man is wearing a loin-cloth (*sirat*), the traditional garment of Iban males. Photograph taken on 15th October, 1949; Sungai Sut, Kapit District. 243 X 291

11. An Iban woman sowing *padi*. The burn has been an exceedingly poor one, but the farmers have no recourse but to sow their *padi* amid the fallen timber that still covers the land. The woman is wearing a sun-hat (*tanggi*). Photograph taken on 3rd September, 1949; Sungai Saban, Ulu Sut, Kapit District.

12. A young Iban girl amid ripening *padi*; on another part of the farm reaping is already in progress. The stumps are those of virgin jungle (*kampong*), and beyond lie the hills of the Mujong. Photograph taken on 21st February, 1951; Sungai Sut, Kapit District. 243 X

13. A young man setting a spear-trap (*peti*) at the edge of his farm to protect it from wild pigs. He is wearing a hand-woven jacket (*kelambi*). Photograph taken on 4th March, 1950; Sungai Sut, Kapit District. 224 291

14. A watch-house (*langkau umai*); with walls and roofing of bark, it is strategically placed in the centre of the farm. In the foreground young *padi* is springing up. Against the front wall of the hut a tying-frame (used in *ikat* weaving) is leaning. Photograph taken on 21st February, 1951; Sungai Sut, Kapit District. 343 285

15. An Iban woman guarding her farm. The *padi* in the background—the second successive crop from virgin jungle—has already been reaped. Photograph taken on 20th February, 1951; Sungai Sut, Kapit District. 243 X

16. Reaping in progress: the woman is gathering the panicles one by one and placing them in the reaping-basket (*sintong*) which is fastened about her waist. (The *padi* shown here is that of a test plot which gave a yield equivalent to 42·8 bushels per acre). Photograph taken on 24th April, 1950; Sungai Sut, Kapit District.

17. After reaping the *padi* is packed in large carrying baskets (*lanji*) and transported back to the *dampa* or long-house to be threshed. Photograph taken on 22nd April, 1950; Sungai Sut, Kapit District. 482 415

18. Winnowing taking place on the open platform (*tanju*) of a farm house (*dampa*). One woman pours the threshed grain from a basket (*baka*) while the other fans with a winnowing tray (*chapan*). Photograph taken on 12th April, 1950; Sungai Sut, Kapit District. 243 X 415

19. A woman planting *sengkenyang*—magical plants which are believed to watch over and minister to the needs of the growing *padi*. They are planted close to the sacred rice (*padi pun*) in the centre of the farm. Photograph taken on 15th October, 1949; Sungai Sut, Kapit District. 243 X

20. An old man and his daughter making an offering to the *padi* spirits (*antu padi*) during a *nganjong ka penyadai* ritual. This important ritual inaugurates the harvest. The offering (*piring*) can be seen resting on the ground between the two officiants. Photograph taken on 7th March, 1950; Sungai Sut, Kapit District. 782

21. In the reaping basket (*sintong*) which this young man is carrying is the seed (*benih*) of the sacred rice (*padi pun*) of his *bilek* family. Dressed in an *ikat* jacket, worn in honour of the sacred rice, he is taking part in a ritual to celebrate the conclusion of the harvest. Photograph taken on 20th May, 1950; Sungai Sut, Kapit District. 415 482 291

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Plate 17. An Iban youth carrying freshly reaped *padi* back to the long-house.

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Plate 18. Two Iban women winnowing their *padi*.

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Plate 21. A young Iban man carrying the seed of his sacred rice (*padi pun*) in a reaping basket (*sintong*).

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Plate 22. A steep slope being prepared for cultivation.

3: Low G-5 (1844-1847) 1848
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of luxury. The Dyaks eat their food from the ground for a table; each having taken a portion of rice which he considers sufficient for him, this, if he be not provided with a plate, which many of them are, is placed upon a clean leaf of the Dillenia speciosa, and he dips his hand into the common stock of salt which is placed in the centre of the group. If they have flesh to their repast it is partaken of in a similar manner to the salt. They never drink during their meal, but on rising wash their hands and mouths, and afterwards take a draught of water from the bamboos, which are always kept full near the fire-place. Though they eat from the ground or floor of their houses, they rarely sit cross-legged upon it like the Malays, but have each a small block of wood about three inches in thickness, which they use as a seat by day and a pillow by night.

Around the walls of the apartment hang the gongs and other musical instruments, and such portions of their dress as they do not happen to be using, together with their spears, shields, and instruments of war. One side of the house always contains a rack, in which are placed the naked swords of the family, the sheaths hanging by their side. The doors of their houses are protected on the inside by a bar, but as pilfering is rare amongst these people, it is perhaps more to prevent intrusion when they wish for privacy, than as a protection against robbers. This is rendered evident by the doors, which cannot be fas-

3: Low G-5 (1844 1847) 1848
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the white tail feathers, each having a broad black band across it, of the rhinoceros hornbill, are preferred; they have no covering or protection for their thighs or legs, but leave them as on ordinary occasions; their parang, or large chopping knife, is suspended from their left sides, and another string supports on the opposite side the little basket which contains their sirih leaves, betel-nut, and lime, for chewing; these are placed in little cases of bamboo ornamented with brass or silver, and very much carved, but after a very rude manner. A similar bamboo case, and which is generally also carried in this little tambuk, or basket, contains their tinder, flint, and steel; a long knife is generally attached to it.

The women of these tribes are, like their husbands and brothers, short in stature, generally more stoutly made than the Malay women, and with well-developed figures; they are very much fairer than they, or even than the men of their own tribes: while young many of them would be thought very pretty, but soon, from their hard duties and other causes, they become stout and plain, and when old are frequently very ugly. When brought up amongst the Malays they continue much longer in their prime, and are generally thought prettier than the women of that nation: their hair, though naturally as good, from want of care and cultivation never attains such length and profusion amongst those who reside in their own villages, though in circumstances which give them time for the adorn-

3: Low G-5 (1844-1847) 1848
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the flesh of animals, as amongst the inland tribes. Nearly all the beasts of the forest are eaten by these people, even monkeys, alligators (if small), snakes and other reptiles are esteemed. Like the French, they regard frogs as a delicate dish, and bestow considerable pains in procuring them: their rice is cooked in brass or earthen pots, called priuks, which they purchase from the Malays; and plates of English manufacture have recently become very general among them. They eat from the plates with their right hand, compressing the rice (which is not cooked dry as that of the Malays) into a ball of convenient size. They know no way of cooking flesh but by boiling it, which they do in bamboos, having previously cut the whole animal into small pieces.

I once saw some Dyaks roasting a monkey, but did not stay to observe whether they did not boil it afterwards, as they generally partially roast these animals to free them from the hair. They have very little idea of flavouring their food except with salt, though they sometimes employ chilis, or small capsicums, turmeric, and ginger for that purpose. The Sebooyohs, who have lived more intimately with the Malays than the other tribes, have very much improved upon their cooking, the methods having been copied from their Mahometan neighbours. As they have no occasion for fire except for the purposes of cooking, their houses have no chimney, and the little smoke which is created finds its way through

5: Roth E-4 (no date) 1892 OC6 Iban OC6

into the far interior, or plunge into the jungle in quest of its produce.

As a rule the women have to do all the weeding (*mantun*) by themselves; this is a very laborious task, as the weeds grow so rapidly as to threaten to choke the paddy unless promptly removed. Another grievance is the grass, originally called *rumput teku*, but since nicknamed *rumput blanda*, and which they declare was introduced by the whites to feed their cattle on. It is now a proverbial saying with them that it is impossible to get rid of this grass, likewise is it unprofitable to shake off the rule of the white man.

As the paddy begins to ripen, the men return to their homes and the families remove entirely to their farms, where there is plenty to do to scare away the birds and other pests and to prepare for the harvest. The paths intersecting the farm are closed at this season, and no one can traverse them without paying a penalty or sin-offering of a fowl and a bit of iron. Those who may be suffering from positive want, having exhausted their last year's stock, now glean of the half ripe paddy as much as they require for their immediate necessities; this is called *numbar*.

But when the paddy is fully ripe they all turn out, men and women, boys and girls, with knives and baskets and pluck the ripe ears with a few inches of stalk; these are then carried home and put out to dry, after which they are thrown into an enormous sieve suspended from the roof of the house, and threshed by the action of the feet, the grains falling through on to a mat placed underneath on purpose to receive them. After thorough drying in the sun, they are put in tubs made of bark (*tibang*) and stowed away in the loft or else housed in a hut, built on purpose for them hard by the village, the posts of which are furnished with wooden discs immediately below the flooring to prevent the rats from entering. The Dyak method of pounding the paddy to free it from the husk by means of pestle and mortar is injurious to the grain. By it the hard outer skin which protects it from the weevil is broken and this insect soon takes advantage of the circumstance to attack and destroy it. In the husk or paddy state the rice can be kept for years without injury.

The Punans and Kajamans farm meagrely; they prefer the sago to rice and grow the palm.

2. *Habitations.*

A Sea Dyak village is a terrace upon posts varying in length according to the number of houses of which it is composed, and

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

esteemed only as ornaments. Brass ware of all kinds is much valued, especially old brass guns and gongs.

The valuable jars (*tajau*) which the Dyaks prize so highly are in appearance much like the earthen water-pots that are manufactured in large numbers by the Chinese, and which cost from five to ten shillings. But closer examination shows certain differences. The Dyaks are prepared to pay exorbitant prices for a really old jar, and they venerate it and make offerings to it. The best known of these sacred jars are the *Gusi*, the *Naga*, and the *Rusa*. The first is the most valuable of the three. It is of a greenish colour, about eighteen inches high, and is much sought after. A good one would cost £80 or more. The *Naga* is about two feet high, and is called by that name because it is ornamented with Chinese figures of dragons, or *naga*. It is worth from eight to ten pounds. The *Rusa* is covered with the representation of some kind of deer (*rusa*), and is worth about four pounds. These prices, except the first, may not seem very great to our ideas, but when one remembers how poor the Dyaks are, they are very large amounts for them to pay for such fragile things as earthenware jars.

The *Gusi* is always kept wrapped in cloth and treated with the greatest respect. People crawl in its presence, and touch it with the greatest care. At certain feasts a jar of this kind is brought out, and offerings are made to it. Besides being the abode of a spirit, it is supposed to possess marvellous qualities—one of them being that if anything be placed in it overnight, the quantity will increase before morning; another, that food kept in a jar of this kind has peculiar medicinal virtues.

When any of these sacred jars are bought, before bringing it into the room where it is to be kept an offering

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

[Facing p. 124]

A Dyak Wedding

The bride is seated in the middle with a large filigree silver comb in her hair. The bridegroom is seated on her right, and her mother on her left. The old man on the right is the "Master of Ceremonies." Before him, covered with a native cloth, is the basket containing the pieces of split betel-nut, which are examined to see if the marriage will be a happy one.

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7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

he was at last persuaded, and went to his own room to fetch the treasure. 756

"As I have said, the good mats of the household, as is usual when it is intended to show respect to a visitor, had been taken down for our accommodation from the place where they are stored. But we now saw that the most valued of them all had been held in reserve. This, which was made of fine and very flexible *rotan*, the latest triumph of the skill and industry of our courteous hostess, Ipah, Brok's wife, was now handed down and spread in front of us for the reception of the great man and the mysterious implements of his profession. After some considerable delay, probably intended to excite our curiosity the more, he appeared, and sat down on the mat prepared for him, a subdued murmur of applause and satisfaction greeting him as he took his seat.

"A *manang's lupong*, or case for holding his charms, may be almost anything. Sometimes it is a box, sometimes a basket, sometimes a bag. In this instance it was an open-mouthed basket made of thin shavings of bamboo hung round the neck of the owner by a strip of bark. [415]

"Before beginning the exhibition, Dasu made a little formal speech, in which, with much show of humility, he spoke in depreciation of his own powers and knowledge and of his collection of remedial charms, as compared with those of other members of the profession elsewhere. These remarks were of course received with complimentary expressions of dissent from the audience; and then at last the contents of the basket were displayed before us. They were tied up together in a cloth bag, the most highly-prized being further enclosed in special receptacles of their own, such as a second cloth covering, a little bamboo box with a lid, or a match-box. They were ceremoni-

11:Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1957 OC6 Iban OC6

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(1) The gathering of the clay (Iban pot-making).

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(2) Clay being laid out in the sun. (Iban pot-making).

[p. 156a]

Plate XIII

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(3) Dried and pounded clay being sieved.

(4) Sieved clay being mixed with water prior to kneading.

[p. 156 b]

11:Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1957 OC6 Iban OC6

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(5) Kneaded clay being pounded in preparation for modelling.

(6) The commencement of modelling: the top of a cylinder of prepared clay is flattened out.

(7) A ring of cane is inserted in the top of the cylinder.

[531]

[p. 156c]

11:Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1957 OC6 Iban OC6

323 177 178 462 First, the craft of pottery (except for the carving of the wooden beaters) is entirely in the hands of women. The existence of this division of labour is important, because, among the Iban, the women are markedly more conservative and tradition-bound than are the men. Because of the custom of *bejalai*[20] (the undertaking of journeys for material gain and social prestige), almost all Iban men acquire considerable experience of the outside world, as, for example, by working for a timber company in the Rejang delta or on the oil-fields of Brunei. It is through these sophisticated and travelled men that new ideas and values are introduced into Iban communities. The women, on the other hand, are 'stay-at-homes,' whose experience is limited (but for a very occasional visit to the local trading bazaar) to their own and neighbouring long-houses. These are the women who cling—so much more tenaciously than the men—to traditional ways of thought and action. It is understandable, therefore, that the crafts which are wholly in the hands of women, such as *ikat* weaving, basketry and pottery, are well preserved.

323 415 But there are also more particular reasons that account for the fact that earthenware pots are still being made by Iban women—although recepticles of brass, iron and aluminium can be purchased without difficulty in bazaars such as Kapit. The fact is that, for certain purposes, earthenware pots of Iban make are *preferred* to pots made from metal. The issue here is the utility which *priok tanah* have for the Iban, and it is important to note that this utility is not defined in purely monetary terms. That is, Iban preferences are not determined by the fact that other kinds of cooking vessels can be obtained 'more cheaply' than their own, but that for some purposes in the present estimation of the Iban of the Tiau their own *priok tanah* possess qualities not to be found elsewhere.[21] For example, it is recognized that certain kinds of [252] foods (such as some of the relishes, or *enkayu*, which the Iban eat with their rice) taste much the best if they are cooked in an Iban earthenware pot.[22] Thus, Uyang, a middle-aged man of Rumah Tungku, while standing and watching Runin modelling one of her pots, remarked quite spontaneously: *"Nyamai enkayu mandok alam priok tanah; manis, nadai bau lang."* ("How delicious are relishes cooked in an earthenware pot; they are sweet and without unpalatable taste.") We later found that Uyang had expressed a quite general opinion.

323 796 Finally, let me mention again those pots (such as the large pot made by Binyong of Rumah Tungku) which are used for the

11:Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1957 OC6 Iban OC6

(13) On important occasions the Iban wave (*biau*) a cock over an object about which they are praying, the cock being subsequently sacrified. On lesser occasions a fern frond or something similar is sometimes used instead.

(14) It may be objected by the logical that even if one accepts the premises of Iban belief there is no reason for taking into account those who have yet to die. But to make an objection of this kind would be to fail to appreciate the essence of Iban magic and ritual. It will be seen that the words of the *sampi* are in rhyme—as are all Iban prayers and invocations. Thus, the words in themselves have, for the Iban, a kind of magical efficiency. Again, no harm is done by mentioning those who may die to-day or the day after, indeed this can only result in impressing on the spirits of the dead (*antu sabayan*) the great deference which is shown to them by the living.

(15) *Samak* is also used as a brownish dye in *ikat* weaving.

(16) Bernard Leach has given a wonderfully graphic description of the hazards of a firing: "The firing is the climax of the potter's labour, and in a wood-fired kiln of any size it is a long and exhausting process. Weeks and months of work are at stake. Any one of a dozen things may go wrong. Wood may be damp, flues may get choked, bungs of saggers fall, shelves give way and alter the draughts, packing may have been too greedily close, or for sheer exhaustion one may have snatched an hour's sleep, handing over control to someone else and thereby altering the rhythm of the stoking. At white heat things begin to move, to warp and to bend, the roar of combustion takes on a deeper note—the heavy domes crack and tongues of white flames dart out here and there, the four minute stokes fill the kiln shed with bursts or dense black smoke and fire. Even in the East, where hand work is usual and labour specialized, a big kiln firing has the aspect of a battlefield where men test themselves to the utmost against odds." (Bernard Leach, "A Potter's Book," London, 1949, pp. 193-4).

(17) Ibid., p. 263 seq.

(18) It seemed likely that, if anything, Runin's pots had been insufficiently dried prior to firing. (cf. Punai's opinion quoted).

(19) The thickness of wall is about ¼ in.

(20) cf. my "Iban Agriculture," London, 1955, pp. 74-75.

(21) At this point I should make it clear that at Rumah Tungku (as in all the other long-houses of the Baleh we visited) metal pots are in quite general use for the cooking of rice and other foods. Clay pots, where they are used, are used only occasionally and for special purposes.

(22) At Rumah Tungku one family had a pot (12 ins. in widest diameter and with a mouth 8¼ ins. in diameter) which was kept especially for cooking the flesh of wild pigs and deer.